

**SUMMARY OF THE
TNI
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

JUNE 9, 2008

The Policy Committee of The NELAC Institute (TNI) met on June 9, 2008 at 11:30 AM (ET) by teleconference.

Chairperson Mr. Alfredo Sotomayor, of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, led the meeting. A list of committee members is given in Attachment A. A list of the action items generated during this meeting and of uncompleted ones generated during previous meetings is included in Attachment B. The meeting agenda is given in Attachment C.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND STATUS OF ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Sotomayor asked committee members to review the minutes of the May 19, 2008 meeting and to offer any suggestions for changes by June 13, 2008. If he did not receive any requests for changes, he would forward the minutes for posting on the TNI Website.

Mr. Sotomayor forwarded a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) from the Proficiency Testing (PT) Board and the Laboratory Accreditation System Program (LASP) prior to the teleconference for the committee to review.

PROGRAM AND COMMITTEE UPDATES

Those committee members present at the teleconference did not have significant developments to report about their respective programs.

Mr. Sotomayor reported that the TNI Board of Directors had endorsed the proposal of the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) to allow the Assessment Forums to qualify for the annual refreshment training for assessors, but had additional questions that were forwarded to the TAP regarding granting continuing education units (CEU) for completing attendance to the forums.

Mr. Sotomayor also reported that the TNI Board of Directors approved expanding the committee's role to include conflict resolution as outlined in the proposals forwarded to the TNI Board.

STANDARD INTERPRETATION SOP

The committee discussed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 5 – 101, forwarded by the LASP regarding interpretation of the 2003 National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) and TNI Standards. The LASP had presented the SOP to the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP), which considered it favorably. The Policy Committee acknowledged the amount of work that the LASP had invested in drafting the document.

The Policy Committee agreed to forward the SOP to the TNI Board of Directors for confirmation and offered the following comments to the LASP to consider for the next revision of the document:

- Consider changing the last sentence of 1.1 to: "Disputes that do not involve interpretation of standards are to be handled through the appropriate appeals process established by accreditation bodies in policies and procedures." This will emphasize that the SOP only applies to the interpretation of standards and acknowledges that in the future there could be accreditation bodies that are not state governments.
- Consider changing 1.3 to: "The NELAP Board Chair, the LASC Chair, or the respective TNI Program Administrators will direct questions concerning methods or technical issues to either the Technical Assistance Committee (TAC), or an expert committee, as appropriate." This deletes the unnecessary "not the LASC" and recognizes that different programs could have different administrators.
- Add a definition of consensus to section 4.0. This is important in relation to the discussion in 5.2, which states that an inquiry moves forward when consensus is reached about its disposition. Since at the moment, there are only three individuals responsible for making that determination, it is important to clarify whether unanimity is what the LASP intended to convey by consensus.
- The Policy Committee felt that it would be extremely unlikely that the parties in 5.2 would not be able to agree on how to respond to an inquiry. However, should that happen, it is not clear what the parties in 5.2 would do and what recourse the originator of the inquiry would have. The LASP should discuss whether this needs to be addressed in the SOP.

OPERATIONS OF TNI ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The committee discussed an SOP forwarded by the Advocacy Committee. The SOP mirrored TNI's SOP 1 – 101 and therefore it was easy to review.

The Policy Committee agreed to forward the SOP to the TNI Board of Directors and had some minor editorial suggestions that would improve the clarity of the SOP and would like the Advocacy Committee to consider the next time the SOP is revised:

- Include a reference to SOP 1-101 in Section 3.0.
- Delete 6.5.
- Change the number in the second parenthesis in 7.1.2 to 15.
- Delete 7.1.5.

NEW INDEX FOR TNI SOPs; SOP 1 - 100

The committee reviewed the latest index of SOPs forwarded by Mr. Jerry Parr and discussed his suggestions for changing the numbering system. The committee noted that the first part numerical designator on the first page template of all SOPs did not agree with the instructions on the body of SOP 1 – 100. Section 18.0 of the SOP assigned the numerical designator "1" to "General Procedures and Administration", while the template's first page referred to the same numerical designator as "General Standards Development Program", which is not a TNI program. The committee noted the lack of concordance with the numbering in the index and the PT SOPs under review, and the incorrect assignment of the proposal from the Technical

Assistance Committee to an SOP under a numerical designator reserved for the Advocacy Program.

Mr. Sotomayor will contact Mr. Parr to make the necessary changes that will make the index and the SOPs agree. The committee will consider changes regarding the language used for the review and endorsement of SOPs by the Policy Committee and the TNI Board of Directors at a future meeting.

PT BOARD SOPs

The committee will discuss the SOPs sent by the PT Board at its next meeting. At first glance, the Policy Committee noted that the SOPs were highly technical and that in one case, combined apparently by choice, an SOP with a guidance document

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM (ET).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS
TNI
POLICY COMMITTEE
JUNE 9, 2008**

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**TNI
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 9, 2008**

ACTION ITEMS GENERATED AT THIS MEETING

Item No. Meeting Date	Action	Date to be Completed
1. 06/09/08	Mr. Sotomayor will contact Mr. Parr to discuss changes to the numbering of the SOPs on the template and the index he provided.	06/13/08

UNCOMPLETED ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Item No. Meeting Date	Action	Date to be Completed
2. 01/31/07	Mr. Sotomayor will set priorities for developing policies and procedures needed by TNI.	02/28/07
3. 10/22/07	Mr. Parr will compile a graphic list of the Institute's logos and marks that would be covered by POL-103 for consideration by the TNI Board.	12/03/07
4. 10/22/07	The committee will complete drafts of a set of basic TNI administrative policies and SOPs.	04/04/08
1. 11/19/07	Mr. Sotomayor will forward examples of procedures describing appeal procedures for the committee to consider.	02/01/08
2. 03/03/08	The committee will discuss its annual report and work planning.	03/17/08

TNI
Policy Committee

June 9, 2008

11:30 AM – 12:55 PM (ET)

AGENDA

- 11:30 Attendance
- 11:35 Minutes of Previous Meeting
- Status of Action Items
- 11:40 Program and Committee Updates
- 11:45 Standard Interpretation SOP
- 11:55 Operations of TNI Advocacy Committee
- 12:10 PT Board SOPs
- PT Acceptance Criteria
 - Board Operations
 - Voting Process
 - Complaint Resolution
 - PTOB/PTPA
 - PT Caucus
- 12:40 New Index for TNI SOPs; SOP 1- 100
- 12:50 Next Steps
- 12:55 Adjournment